custody of National Archives of India is governed by the Public Records Rules, 1997.

Delays in Decision Making due to Obsolete Methods

2393. DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that delays in decision making due to old and obsolete methods are leading to corruption and decision are taken which give no relief to the people concerned; and

(b) what steps are being taken to reduce delays due to the present filling systems which have no advantage over modern technological methods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS. (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) The Government is conscious of the delay in the decision making processes. Measures have been taken for simplification of laws, rules, and procedures under its policy of preventive vigilance as well as for improving efficiency in organisations. The Government had also set up a Commission on Review of Administrative Laws on May 8, 1998 to make recommendations for repeal/amendment of laws, regulations, procedures, legislative processes etc. The Commission submitted its report on September, 30, 1998. Most of the Ministries have accordingly initiated action to bring about suitable amendments—modifications in the Acts, procedures etc. being administered by them with a view to improve service delivery and bring about transparency in the functioning of the Government. Suitable guidelines have been laid down in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure to ensure quick disposal of cases. Various checks have also been provided to monitor and reduce the pendency of cases in the Government offices. Efforts are made constantly to ensure quick disposal of files by incorporating suitable changes in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure applicable to offices of all Ministries/Departments of the

Central Government. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances also offers help and advice to the Ministries/ Departments in the performance of O&M activities which include

modern office aids, reduction in paper work, fixation of time limits for quick disposal of cases, level jumping and channels of submission as well as steps for better records management.

(b) A software package, namely 'Office Procedure Automation' (OPA), has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to help monitor pendency of files/cases and assist easy tracking and retrieval of files. The package is based on the present procedures of the Central Government prescribed in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure.

Appointment of Area Welfare Officers

* 2394. SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of posts of Areas Welfare Officers (AWOs) are lying vacant for want of receipt of applications which is due to improper circulation of information;

(b) whether it is also a fact that many applications have been rejected merely on the ground of baseless, allegations against some applicants during the preceding three years;

(c) whether any appeal to such rejection of application have been received; and

(d) if so, whether any action has been/is being taken by Government to consider such appeals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES, AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND PENSIONERS' WELFARE OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCE AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Area